



October 29, 1997

Attention: Dr. Larry G. Hart
Executive Secretary
National Toxicology Program Board of
Scientific Counselors
Report on Carcinogens Subcommittee
c/o PO Box 12233
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

Re: October 1997 Subcommittee Review of Tamoxifen

To the Members of the Subcommittee:

The National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organizations is the country's leading non-profit information and education resource on breast cancer, and a network of 375 member organizations that advocate, support and care for many thousands of America's breast cancer patients and survivors. Every day, NABCO's Information Services staff assists thousands of callers on the phone, by mail and on the Internet. More than half of these are women with breast cancer or their families and friends.

Understanding and choosing among treatment options is the leading subject of inquiry for the women with breast cancer who reach us. The good news for these women is that there are now an increasing number of treatments available, treatments that are increasingly effective. Tamoxifen, the agent under review at your meeting, is the most widely-prescribed agent for breast cancer, as it has been shown to be appropriate and effective for a large number of patient subsets.

In furnishing women information about tamoxifen, NABCO is careful to share information about the drug's benefits as well as its side effects. With a large number of years of patient follow-up from worldwide clinical studies, we can say with confidence that tamoxifen is effective in delaying or preventing the recurrence of breast cancer in the adjuvant setting, and in the advanced setting can be effective in controlling the disease. With both historical and emerging information about tamoxifen's side effects, ranging from hot flashes to an association with endometrial cancer, the data is clear: tamoxifen's benefits far outweigh its risks for any individual patient. Misinformation about tamoxifen that disproportionately portrays the threat of cancer or other health risks can have a profound effect — that the woman will choose not to take the drug, robbing herself of a potent weapon in her personal fight against breast cancer.

As you consider how the agent is categorized at your meeting, please give weight to these factors. Please also consider the power that print and broadcast media has, since many women consider the media to be an expert authority for health care information. In the wake of news stories that have distorted the cancer risks associated with tamoxifen, NABCO's staff has spent many hours seeking to restore balance and perspective to highly distressed women ready to stop taking the drug, or too frightened to start taking it.

Founders

Diane Blum, MSW
Nancy Brenner
Rose Kushner
Earl Spier

Medical Advisory Board

7 Andrew Petr, M.D.
Bernard Fisher, M.D.
Edwin Fisher, M.D.
Rita H. Gruber, M.D.
Joy R. Harris, M.D.
Samuel Hellman, M.D.
Craig Henderson, M.D.
Maureen M. Henderson, M.D.
Jimmie Holland, M.D.
V. Craig Jordan, Ph.D., D.Sc.
Merr C. Lippman, M.D.
C. Kent Osborne, M.D.
Abraham T. Osborne, M.D.
William J. Pines, M.D., Ph.D.
David I. Pressman, M.D.
Alan S. Rabson, M.D.
John H. Ross, M.D.
Jeffrey Schlom, M.D.
Philip Smith, M.D.
William C. Wood, M.D.
Agneta Zelen, Ph.D.

Honorary Board

Barbara Bellack
Debra Sims
Hon. William J. Clinton
Helen Brown
Frances Chung
President Bill Clinton
Betty Ford
Betty Friedman
Mrs. Margaret
Flora Lewis
Grace Mirabella
Guzelene Morabauer
Hon. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.
Betty Ruffin
Hon. Frank Rosten

Board of Directors

Larry Norton, M.D., President
Joan Elin Bergan
Robert Goldstein
Betty Carter
Judith R. Haberkorn
Ellen R. Levine
Joan McGuire
Minnie Harman Meyers
Stanley Pottinger
Valerie Valombrie
Kathy Spear
Ann Robinson Hoch
Ruth A. Witzberger

Executive Director

Ann S. Langer

Associate Executive Director

Kimberly Calder

Founding Executive Director

Editor, NABCO News
Kath Spier

East 37th St., 10th Floor
New York, New York 10016
212-685-0500 Office
800-605-NABCO Info. Services
212-685-1213 Fax
http://www.nabco.org

10016

Dr. Larry G. Hart

-2-

October 29, 1997

On behalf of those women, and the hundreds of thousands more who will face a breast cancer diagnosis this year, we respectfully urge your Subcommittee to act with care and be mindful of the lives that will be affected by your decision. Women with breast cancer are increasingly surviving their disease. It is important that they, and those who love and care for them, have full and fair information about the drugs that will help them. The non-profit, public and private sectors must work together in support of that goal.

Please contact me if I can offer any further assistance. Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Very truly yours,



Amy S. Langer
Executive Director

Conflict of Interest Disclosure : Zeneca Pharmaceuticals and Barr Laboratories are among the many corporations and foundations that have supported NABCO's information and education programs since our founding in 1986.